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FORM AND CONTENT IN TOTEMISM ¹

By A. A. GOLDENWEISER

WHILE the definition of totemism proposed in "Totemism, an Analytical Study" ² must be pronounced as anything but illuminating, it serves to emphasize the two essential elements in totemism which have to a different degree been insisted upon in all theoretical discussions of the subject. For, if totemism may be designated as *a specific socialization of emotional values*, ³ it contains the two basic factors, the emotional values and the specific socialization. The former constitute the content of totemism, the latter the form.

The content of totemic phenomena, that is, the actual beliefs, practices, attitudes involved, were first to arouse the attention of investigators. In McLennan's now obsolete articles on *The Worship of Animals and Plants* totemism is discussed as an aspect of zoölatric and phytolatric phenomena. That the content of totemism is uppermost in the mind of Frazer of the original *Totemism*, appears from his classification of the subject into "clan, sex, and individual totemism." The same applies to Andrew Lang. While the significance, in fact, basic character of exogamy in connection with totemism, was recognized by these authors, exogamy, although in those days often referred to as "the social aspect of totemism," really constitutes but part of the totemic content, thus in no sense corresponding to that specific kind of socialization of cultural features, which in recent years has been discussed as the formal aspect of totemism. No essential departure from the older standpoint is noticeable in the work of van Gennep, or in the systematizations of S. Reinach. Similarly oriented are the studies of Jevons, Gomme, Wundt, and Durkheim, for whom totemism is primarily a

¹ This article is an expansion of a lecture read before the American Anthropological Association, at Philadelphia, in December, 1917.

² *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, vol. XXIII (1910), pp. 179-293.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

stage in the evolution of belief or *Weltanschauung*. Wundt, who deals with exogamy at length, does not seem to have realized the true nature of the formal aspect of totemism. Durkheim, on the contrary, is aware of the fact but fails to develop it or, in fact, to make any effective use of it. It is worth noting that Léon Marillier in his remarkable critique of Jevons¹ reveals his usual insight also in this connection; in fact, his conceptualization of the formal aspect of totemism must be recognized as almost exact. In his latest work on the subject, *Totemism and Exogamy*, Frazer also reaches the insight which, in fact, flows naturally from his extensive familiarity with the descriptive material; but, with the conceptual nonchalance so characteristic of that author, he repeatedly reverts to one of his former positions, apparently unaware of the implied contradiction.

In the analytical study referred to before, the present writer, at the close of a critical survey, arrived at the conclusion that the social aspect was all-important in totemism, in fact, that totemism, or any particular totemic complex, represented a specific socialization of certain religious attitudes. On the other hand, these attitudes, that is, the totemic content, appeared so variable, the religious aspect, in particular, so attenuated, that it seemed impossible to particularize the content in a definition, and hence the concept "emotional values" was introduced for the totemic content. As might, perhaps, have been anticipated, the excessive generality of this definition soon proved to mar its usefulness as a conceptualization of the totemic phenomenon. It was pointed out, with justice, that the specific socialization claimed as characteristic of totemism was equally marked in religious societies,² and again that the term "emotional values" conveyed nothing of the variable but withal sufficiently distinctive content of totemic phenomena.³ Thus a situation arose which threatened to become an *impasse*. At length, however, the writer realized how unreasonable it was to even

¹ "La place du totémisme dans l'évolution religieuse," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, vols. 36 and 37.

² This stricture was first made by Dr. Robert H. Lowie at a seminar after the writer had presented a preliminary outline of his study of totemism.

³ Mr. Sidney Hartland and A. van Gennep were particularly vigorous in their denunciations of this point.

attempt to formulate in a definition the basic principles of a phenomenon as complex as totemism. Thus the resolve was made to substitute for the definition a brief description in general terms, a conceptualized description. This was tentatively carried out in "The Origin of Totemism,"¹ and received its present form in the *Totemism* article of the New International Encyclopaedia, p. 368. To quote:

The set of associated cultural traits invariably present in a totemic community may be designated as a *totemic complex*. What then are the essential constituents of a totemic complex? They are three in number:

1. The totemic tribe is subdivided into a number of social units, usually clans or gentes, but sometimes families or local groups.
2. The people of the tribe possess a set of beliefs and practices—mythological religious, ceremonial, artistic, economic—which almost in all cases center around certain attitudes toward animals, plants or inanimate objects.
3. These beliefs and practices are distributed among the people of the tribe in such a way that the beliefs and practices of each social unit—usually clan or gens—while not identical with, are equivalent to those of all the other social units. The social units are thus constituted equivalent totemic units, while the entire system is a totemic complex.

This summary may be amplified by a quotation from another as yet unpublished paper:

In every totemic community we find the tribe differentiated into a number of social units, clans. Within the limits of such clans the so-called "totemic" features are socialized. The specific content of the features differs from clan to clan, but the form these features assume, their functional relation to the clans, is the same throughout the totemic complex. The totemic complex is thus constituted a firmly knit sociological integer, while the clans appear as equivalent totemic units.

In a recent publication Dr. Franz Boas endorses part of the position expressed in the above statements. That totemism always appears as a tribal complex of social units disparate in content but functionally homologous, is confirmed in the assertion:

Common to totemism in the narrower sense of the term is the view that sections of a tribal unit composed of relatives, or supposed relatives, possess each certain definite customs which differ in content from those of other similar sections of the same tribal unit, but agree with them in form or pattern.²

¹ *American Anthropologist*, vol. 14 (1912), p. 603.

² "The Origin of Totemism," *American Anthropologist*, vol. 18 (1916), p. 321.

The author also condemns unreservedly the views of such writers as Wundt and Durkheim for the excessive emphasis they lay on the "identification of man and animals" involved in totemism. Dr. Boas writes:

It appears to me, therefore, an entirely different problem that is treated by these authors, a problem interesting and important in itself, but one which has little bearing upon the question of totemism as a social institution. Their problem deals with the development of the concepts referring to the relation of man to nature, which is obviously quite distinct from that of the characterization of kinship groups. The only connection between the two problems is that the concepts referring to the relation of man to nature are applied for the purpose of characterizing social, more particularly kinship groups.¹

While two of the writer's positions are thus seen to be supported by Dr. Boas, the last sentence of the above-quoted statement implies an endorsement of the position taken in *Totemism* of 1910, while registering a disagreement with the writer's more recent attitude. For, Dr. Boas's statement condemns all specification of the totemic content, regarding it as significant for totemism, not in its intrinsic character, but only through its association with the social units. At another place Dr. Boas says:

I consider it inadvisable to draw a rigid line between totemic phenomena in a still more limited sense—namely, in so far as the characteristics of tribal exogamic sections deal with the relations of man to animals and plants—but believe that we should study all the customs connectedly, in their weaker form as well as in their most marked totemic forms.²

The variability of content in totemic complexes in different areas leads Dr. Boas to still another conclusion. He writes:

Since the contents of totemism as found in various parts of the world show such important differences, I do not believe that all totemic phenomena can be derived from the same psychological or historical sources. Totemism is an artificial, not a natural unit.³

The two theoretical issues implied in the above quotation having thus come to a head, it seems incumbent upon the writer to advance further arguments in justification of his more recent position.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

² *Ibid.*, p. 322.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

First of all it seems desirable to disabuse the mind of the reader of any suspicion that the issue involved is one of definition or terminology. Nothing is further from the truth. It is obviously not a matter theoretically indifferent whether the content of totemic phenomena is, so far as the totemic problem is concerned, to be regarded as of no consequence or of specific significance; nor is it theoretically irrelevant whether the unity of totemic phenomena is to be regarded as an abstraction—possibly based on “premature classification”—or whether in that unity there is to be seen a phenomenon of psychological and historical significance. The relevancy of the totemic content and the unity of totemism in different areas are theoretical issues fully on a par with the other two about which agreement is now reached, namely, totemism as an association of historically disparate features into a complex, and totemism as a specific form of socialization.

The propositions to which we now turn are these: the specific content of totemic phenomena, in so far as certain attitudes toward things in nature play so conspicuous a part in them, is not adventitious but significant; totemism, while not presenting in its make-up any new principle not found in other cultural phenomena, is nevertheless a specific institution, deserving as such a separate concept and term.

Let us discuss the second proposition first. That the presence in totemism of certain special attitudes toward nature, is, as such, nothing distinctive, scarcely needs further elucidation; for some form of zoölatry, phytolatry, or nature worship in the widest sense is as universal as the domain of primitive religion. More than that, all the particular aspects of the attitudes to things in nature, such as the recognition of kinship with them, descent from them, community of nature, their appearance as omens, protectors, etc., all of these are also plentifully represented in other non-totemic contents.¹ The social organization with which the totemic content is associated is also a feature not in itself totemic. While the over-

¹ The same, of course, applies to the other elements of the totemic content, religious, æsthetic, economic, etc., all of which in the typical and most common instances appear as correlated with certain attitudes toward nature (cf. “Totemism, an Analytical Study,” *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, vol. XXIII, (1910), pp. 251-264).

whelming majority of clan systems appear as carriers of totemic complexes—of this more anon—there are exceptions, which, while rare, are frequent enough not to be negligible.

The particular form of socialization of various features which appears in totemism is also found in different kinds of societies, military, medicinal, religious. In all of these, as in totemism, the different social units—for societies are such, as well as clans, gentes, families, local groups—are differentiated in specific content while being functionally homologous. In many instances it is this feature only which seems analogous to the totemic situation, while the features themselves, the concrete content of the institution is quite different. But in religious societies such as occur, for instance, in the American southwest and northwest, in West Africa, in Melanesia, the content itself is often strikingly similar to that found in totemic complexes.¹ Moreover, all tribal sets of societies, no less than totemic complexes, represent closely knit aggregates of features of historically heterogeneous provenience. Thus, no doubt can remain that whatever principle attaches to the make-up of a totemic complex finds more or less numerous replicas also outside of that content. The purely analytical treatment of the totemic complex, then, serves to deprive it of all individuality in either specific composition, or principle of organization, or historic perspective. It is the writer's opinion that this result points to the limitations of a purely analytical method. A very different light is thrown on the situation with the introduction of the historico-geographical standpoint. As the central feature in this view is the association of the totemic complex with a clan or gentile system, the argument may fitly be opened by a somewhat more careful examination of the theoretical relation between such systems and tribal sets of religious societies. As such an examination has been attempted by the

¹ It may be noted that the classificatory aspect of totemism (*cf.* Boas, "The Origin of Totemism," *American Anthropologist* (1916), p. 326) is also of much wider distribution than that implied in its connection with totemism. We recall such phenomena as college banners and pins, automobile insignia, regimental flags and mascots, street names, and—to mention one most recent instance—the names of British tanks. In all of these instances, including the totemic ones, the psychological as well as logical requirements of the classificatory situation call for the use of a variety of things, names, symbols, which, however, in each instance, remain within the same category.

writer in the Encyclopaedia article referred to before, the passage (pp. 370-371) may be quoted in full:

Totemic communities, as complexes of historically and psychologically heterogeneous features, display certain striking similarities to another form of socio-religious association fairly common in primitive groups, namely, religious societies. A religious society is a group of individuals who bear a common name, often derived from an animal, share a set of religious and mythological beliefs, and perform together certain ceremonies.¹ Where the societies occur, there always is more than one society in the tribe, while often a large part of the individuals of the tribe are grouped in religious societies. While male societies are by far the more common, female societies also occur, but almost invariably the membership of a society does not include both sexes, but is restricted to the one or the other. The geographical distribution of religious societies is rather striking. In a large number of totemic areas religious societies also occur, for instance, in the northwestern, southwestern, southeastern and eastern Plains areas of North America, in West Africa and Melanesia. This distribution suggests possibilities of genetic relationship. Webster in his *Secret Societies* has propounded a theory according to which religious societies are to be regarded as totemism in decay, as a normal stage of evolution from totemism to other forms of religious organization. In this dogmatic form the theory must certainly be rejected, but it may contain a germ of truth in so far as genetic relationship between totemism and religious societies may have obtained in individual instances. Thus in the southwest of North America religious societies may have developed out of totemic clans, while in the eastern Plains area, represented by the Omaha and other Siouan tribes, totemic gentes may have grown out of local groups with religio-ceremonial functions. According to recent evidence such relations between the two institutions also seem probable in certain parts of Melanesia. Of even greater interest than the geographical and possible genetic relations between totemism and religious societies, are the similarities and contrasts of the two institutions from a theoretical standpoint. In the one case as in the other the tribe is divided into a set of social units; these units have common functions, ceremonial, religious, artistic; and these functions cluster about or grow out of certain attitudes toward animals, plants or inanimate objects, although the latter feature is by no means as characteristic of religious societies as it is of totemic complexes. In the one case, moreover, as in the other the institution must be regarded as a complex of historically disparate traits. The similarity thus seems almost to approach identity. The contrasts, however, are equally significant. While religious societies, like clans, are social units, they are constituted social units solely by the exercise of common functions. Take away the functions and nothing remains but an aggregate of wholly unrelated individuals. Not so in the case of clans. While it is true that in the case of the clan also its functions determine its precise position in the

¹Of course, various ceremonial paraphernalia, artistic features, etc., should be added to this statement.

culture of the group, the clan would remain a social unit even if stripped of all its functions. This is due to its social composition, for a clan is a hereditary group of individuals who are in part related by blood and in part assume themselves to be so related. This constitutes perhaps the most fundamental contrast between a clan and a religious society. Other differences are not lacking, however. The religious aspect is almost invariably more pronounced in the societies than it ever is in the totemic clans. The societies are largely uni-sexual, while the clan always embraces related individuals of both sexes. The clan is a hereditary unit, while the society is usually non-hereditary, although certain offices in it may be hereditary, and a tendency towards inheritance of the society itself occurs here and there. Thus what might be called the socio-psychological flavor of a tribal group of societies is quite distinct from that of a totemic complex. Therefore, while the two institutions, somewhat conspicuously coextensive in geographical distribution, present striking similarities in point of cultural content, and suggest from the theoretical standpoint a set of similar problems, it will be profitable to keep them apart conceptually as well as for purposes of intensive study. On the other hand, the comparative study of totemic complexes and religious societies promises to prove a most fascinating aspect of totemic research.

In the light of the above considerations totemism appears as descriptively distinctive, while presenting no special or unique principle in its make-up. The distinctiveness lies in the association of the totemic content with a clan system. If we are to estimate rightly the historical bearing of totemism, as a primitive institution, we must conceive of it as an adjunct, as an all but universal adjunct of clan and gentile organizations. This gives it its specific flavor and accounts for its geographical distribution and, from another angle, for its place in history. For it must be remembered that hereditary kinship systems, clans and gentes, represent one of the two basic forms of primitive social organization, the other being the family-village form, which lacks hereditary social units. Clan and gentile systems have an enormous distribution in primitive culture areas and with it goes an almost equally wide distribution of totemic complexes. If the concept of adhesion is applied here, the two phenomena are seen to appear together almost invariably, the instances where totemic complexes are not based on clan or gentile systems, and those in which the latter are not carriers of totemic complexes being very rare. Thus, the geographical distribution of the two phenomena reveals the fact that there must be here some deep-rooted organic determinant, that there must be some inherent

fitness which draws the contents of totemic complexes into the socializing meshes of clan and gentile systems. To this point we shall presently revert; but before this is done a few words must be said with reference to the alleged artificiality of the concept "totemism."

The concept "totemism" is deemed artificial, not natural, for reasons partly of historical, partly of psycho-sociological order: the historic development of totemic complexes was different, hence they are genetically disparate and non-comparable; the concrete content of totemic complexes is highly variable, hence, from a socio-psychological or cultural standpoint, they are also disparate and non-comparable. The logical limit of this attitude is to regard the concept and term "totemism" as an unjustifiable abstraction based on superficial knowledge of the comparative material or on disregard of significant differences in that material. When these errors are rectified, the concept "totemism" may be expected to become obsolete, its place being taken by a number of less inclusive concepts which would conform more accurately with the concrete data.

To meet this argument the following considerations may be adduced. While it must, of course, be admitted that the specific processes which brought the individual totemic complexes into being must have varied greatly,—in the features that developed, in the order of their development, in the time consumed by the processes of socialization and totemic assimilation, in the hundred and one ways in which in themselves trifling accidental happenings will influence and mould culture,—nevertheless these processes, when viewed in the synthesizing light of historic perspective, reveal certain not unimportant parallelisms.

Thus, the not inconspicuous similarities in the content of totemic complexes must find their developmental counterpart in certain resemblances of the circumstances under which the similar features arose in the different complexes. Again, certain features are obviously more primitive than others, some derivatives of others; and so, wherever the two types of features have appeared in the course of totemic developments, there must have been similarities in the relations of these features. Then again, the very processes

of socialization and psychological assimilation of features, with all the disparity and individuality in special instances, comprise inevitably so many common conditions of a general socio-psychological kind, that the mechanisms at work must have also been similar in many ways.

As to the variability of features in totemic complexes, it is, of course, very considerable.¹ And yet, if the contrasts are set aside, a very respectable nucleus remains which recurs in a large number of instances. Thus, the idea of intimate relationship with the totem, whether in the form of descent, transformation, association, physical or psychic resemblance, or of some other sort; the use of the totem as an eponym; the totem as a symbol, whether in art, or as property mark, or as a sign of rank; these are features of enormously wide distribution in totemic communities; and other features might be named which are only less common. Moreover, in the opinion of the writer, even the following assumption is justifiable. There can be no doubt that the variability of totemic phenomena both in content and genetically speaking is sufficient to discourage any attempt at analogical evolutionary reconstruction in any specific instance. Nevertheless, the similarities referred to above are such as to warrant the expectation that, were the totemic developments all brought to light, a cross-section of their contents could be made at different chronological levels which would reveal an even greater general resemblance than that resulting from a comparison of the complexes now open to investigation.

It appears, then, that from an objective standpoint the contents of totemic complexes and the historic processes which brought them into being may not be regarded as wholly disparate. It is, however, questionable whether, in considering the alleged "artificiality" of the concept "totemism," the objective and genetic standpoints are the proper ones to take.

Many students of culture will admit that the true level for cultural comparisons is the psycho-sociological level, in view of the fact that cultural values themselves lie in that level and that con-

¹ Cf., for instance, "Totemism," etc., *Journal of American Folk-Lore* (1910), pp. 225-228.

stant transvaluations in culture ever tend to play havoc with genetic similarities and differences. While the truth of this is recognized, but very few are willing to concede to comparisons of a psycho-sociological character the same significance which, in their view, attaches to parallels based on genetic relationship. Now, while the latter standpoint is evidently in place when historic reconstruction is the task on hand, cultural interpretations must rely on material which lies in the level of culture itself, the psycho-sociological level—here the genetic retrospect is irrelevant. If this contention is brought to bear on our problem, it presently appears that the real comparability of totemic complexes lies over and above the resemblances in their concrete contents, that this comparability, moreover, is independent of the above resemblances and might indeed persist in their absence. For, however totemic complexes may differ, they all represent totemic cultures to the individuals who are the psychological carriers of such complexes, they represent totemic cultures since they all partake of that specifically socialized supernaturalism which is particularized in the varying clan contents and is synthesized through that spirit of fundamental equivalence rooted in the very nature of a clan system, through the formal identity of the totemic clan functions, through the secondarily derived equivalence flowing from such formal identity of totemic functioning, and, lastly, through the cultural flavor or “feel” of the psychic or cultural level (*Denkart*), which makes that variety of supernaturalism and the particular type of its social transformation congenial to certain societies and cultures. It is considerations such as these that make totemism appear as one of the most characteristic and sharply defined institutions of primitive society, thus vindicating its claim to a separate concept and term.

This brings us to the last point at issue: is it true that the content of totemic phenomena centers, at least in a majority of cases, about certain attitudes toward things in nature? And, if so, must we accept this phenomenon—the adhesion between totemic social structure (form) and a kind of supernaturalism (content)—as a fact, so far unexplainable, but pointing unmistakably toward a deeper connection between the two phenomena? or does not an

analytical examination reveal a certain fitness in the situation which could, at least, form the basis for a future more systematic interpretation? To forestall our conclusion, it is the opinion of the writer that the fact itself of the adhesion is undeniable and that a general theoretical explanation can be offered for its existence. We may dispense with argument in proof of the assertion that certain attitudes toward nature stand, in the majority of totemic communities, in the very center of the totemic content, for most of those familiar with totemic phenomena will not hesitate to endorse the assertion. The question remains: is there any perceivable fitness in the fact as we know it? Can any reason be assigned for the undisputed tendency of certain attitudes toward animals, plants and inanimate things to become associated with the type of social system which underlies all totemic complexes?

The reason, in general terms, seems to be that the social situation in totemism creates certain demands and tendencies which have already been realized in the course of the association of man with nature, hence, they are promptly seized upon and utilized for totemic purposes. To particularize:

In a community subdivided into social units, such as clans, the first demand is for some kind of classifiers, preferably names, which would identify the separate units and yet signify their equivalence by belonging to one category. Again, hereditary kinship groups, such as clans, with a strong feeling of common interest and solidarity tend, so socio-psychological experience shows, to project their community spirit into some concrete thing which henceforth stands for the unity of the group and readily acquires a certain halo of sanctity. It often happens with such objects that certain rules of behavior develop with reference to them, both positive and negative rules, prescriptions and restrictions. Such objects thus become symbols of the social values of the groups. Their very objectivity as well as emotional significance lend themselves readily to artistic elaboration. All along the classificatory aspect remains a fixed requirement, so that whatever traits may develop in the social crucible, appear as homologous traits. Then again, the sense of kinship between members of the individual clans, especially in

view of the absence of precise degrees of relationship and sometimes supported by the genealogical tendency, will often express itself in hypothetical descent from a common ancestor. Also, it would obviously fit the needs of the situation if the above objectivations of the social values consisted of things congenial to man, the properties of which were near and dear to him, of things, however, that would not lie too closely within the realm of specifically human activities, as, in such a case, confusion might result, the sense of property might interfere with the smooth running of the system. Again, it would seem eminently desirable that the things should belong to classes, each one representing a homogeneous group, as this condition would ideally satisfy the requirement that they figure as symbols and objectivations of groups of individuals who, within each group, profess intense feelings of solidarity and homogeneity.

Such, in rough outline, would be the tendencies of a community subdivided into clans.

Now, if the individuals who are the psychic foci of these tendencies had nothing in their experience or psychic content to draw upon to satisfy the demands of the situation, some new creations might be expected to appear which would to some extent satisfy the demands of these social tendencies.¹ But our hypothesis is contrary to fact. For, there exists in all primitive communities a complex of experiences and attitudes which has produced values of just the sort needed in the above social situation, has produced them long before any totemic complex or any clan system have made their

¹ It may not be amiss to note in connection with this interpretation of the totemic complex its differences from as well as similarity to that offered by E. Durkheim in his *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. From the standpoint represented above Durkheim's sociology is correct, but his ethnology is at fault. He analyzes the social situation in a way not dissimilar to the one adopted by the present writer. Then he proceeds to derive the totemic complex directly from the tendencies flowing from the social situation. Therein lies the difference of the two positions. It seems to the writer quite unjustifiable and contrary to the economy of effort which is but a correlate of the principle of psychic inertia to assume that new, so-to-say duplicate values will be created in a social situation, in the presence of preëxisting values which, as the above analysis shows, fit admirably the requirements of the case. In justice to Durkheim, however, it must be said that he could not be expected to take this view, as he does not see the way to deriving the psychic values which are here assumed as preëxisting from any other source but the very social situation involved.

appearance among men. That complex comprises the experiences resulting from man's contact with nature and the attitudes flowing therefrom. Among these the experiences with and the attitudes toward animals occupy the foremost place, although those referring to plants and inanimate objects are of almost equal significance. Things in nature have at all times exercised multitudinous functions in human society, and the attitudes they have aroused, matter-of-fact as well as supernatural attitudes, range as far as does man himself. These things, animals in particular, are constantly used for naming purposes, for naming individuals; groups of all varieties, such as families, societies, clubs, game teams, political parties, houses, constellations. They are beautifully adjusted to the function of classifiers, as names or otherwise, for they contain many individuals belonging to the same or to several wide categories, they are familiar and congenial to man, yet lie outside the circle of specifically human things and activities, thus not being subject to the action of those disturbing agencies which abound within that realm. Again, animals, as well as other things in nature, are early drawn into the domain of art, they are painted, tattooed, carved, woven, embroidered, dramatized in dances; they figure in realistic as well as geometric representations, thus also rising into prominence as badges, signs and symbols. Primitive man almost everywhere regards himself as somewhat akin to the animal, and many mythologies abound in animals that were men and in men who are metamorphosed animals. Often descent is traced from animals. Again, it is hard to find a tribe where some sort of prescriptive or proscriptive rules do not exist referring to animals, or also plants or other things. Religious attitudes toward things in nature are as universal as religion itself. Moreover, to the eyes of men organized into mutually disparate and internally homogeneous units, the kingdom of animals and only to a less degree that of plants present a spectacle of strange congeniality: for just as in their own social system, these kingdoms embrace beings or things that belong to the same general kind, but are subdivided into categories that are disparate while internally homogeneous.

Now, it must be remembered that all of these experiences,

relations and attitudes belong to the range of the common human: they are found in most primitive communities and many of them reach far into the historic period including modern life itself.¹ Hence a community organized into definite hereditary social units, say clans, finds itself already in possession of most or all of these experiences and attitudes. But we have seen how in such a community, on account of its sociological make-up, certain tendencies must and, as experience shows, almost invariably do arise. These tendencies point toward just such relations, attitudes, functions, as we have seen have everywhere arisen out of man's experience with nature, particularly with animals and only to a less degree with plants. If these cultural features—for such they are—were not there, the social situation might have created them, or something like them. But they are there. Hence, the demands of the social situation are readily satisfied out of this rich store of pre-existing psychological material. The precise how and when of the process is another story,² nor does it particularly matter. The

¹ This point deserves special emphasis. For, whereas a hereditary clan system or even the tendency toward the formation of one must of necessity be regarded as a relatively late form of social organization, the greatest antiquity must be ascribed to the psychic and cultural phenomena referred to above. The minimum requirement for their origination embraces no more than the psyche of man furnished with the very rudiments of culture, and nature. Therefore we find that those phenomena are omnipresent in primitive society and also extend, in attenuated forms, into the very heart of modern culture, as witnessed to by the ever recurring tendency to anthropomorphize the psychic life of animals, or by ethical vegetarianism, or by the rich store of animalistic metaphor and allusion used in connection with human countenances, characters, affairs, which tend, not always ineffectively, to break down the barriers between man and animal which better knowledge and a matter-of-fact attitude toward life and things have brought into being.

² It will be noted that an attempt is here made to account in theoretical terms for the *content*, or the major part of the content of a totemic complex. Some time ago, in "The Origin of Totemism" (*American Anthropologist*, vol. 14, 1912, pp. 603-605), a similar attempt was made to express in general theoretical terms the *process* which brings a totemic complex into being. This process was shown to be achieved by means of a sociological mechanism for moulding the totemic content into the form of the social system. Certain peculiarities of that mechanism induced the writer to apply the term *pattern theory* to this view of totemic development. The totemic content, in its concrete aspects, received no attention in that theory: the content was treated as adventitious or accidental. In the above discussion use is made of the generally recognized and undeniable fact that the basic part of the content of a totemic complex comprises, in the majority of instances, certain attitudes toward nature. The theoretical analy-

crucial and significant point is this: a group divided into hereditary clans spontaneously develops tendencies the limiting value of which is a totemic complex. For the realization of these tendencies certain psychological or cultural data are required. These are found available. In a situation which, were they absent, might have itself created them, they are utilized promptly and effectively. Thus a totemic complex arises.

It will thus be seen that there exists an inherent and most deep-rooted fitness between the supernaturalism referred to before and the social system which absorbs it. It is, then, to be expected that the vast majority of groups divided into hereditary social units will develop some sort of totemic complexes. And such is found to be the case.

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sis made above represents an attempt to provide a general explanation of the association of that specific content with the totemic social system. The crux of the explanation lies in the discovery of a marked correspondence between the tendencies arising in a social system of the type involved and the ideas and attitudes springing from man's contact with nature. This correspondence or fitness leads to the merging of the above ideas and attitudes with the social system. Hence this theory of the totemic content may be designated as the *fitness theory*. In it the form is not represented as creating the content, as is the case in Durkheim's theory; but the social form is shown to develop certain tendencies which have some such content as their limiting value, hence the content, here shown to be preëxisting, is absorbed by the social form.